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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.7

Twentieth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.7 on the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (A/C.5/57/26).

2. As indicated in paragraphs 2 and 22 to 27 of the Secretary-General statement (A/C.5/57/26), should the General Assembly decide to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.7, there would be financial implications for the regular budget in the biennium 2002-2003 in an amount of up to $412,800, for the establishment of a secretariat in 2003 for the Forum on Indigenous Issues at a cost of $382,000 (initially three posts -- see para. 3 below) and the convening of a three-day pre-sessional meeting at a cost of $30,800 for the daily subsistence allowance of the members of the Forum from 7 to 9 May 2003.

3. The work of the proposed secretariat for the Forum is outlined in paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's statement. The Forum secretariat would include six posts: four at the Professional level (one D-1, one P-4, one P-3 and one P-2) and two General Service posts. The functions of these six posts are described in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's statement. The Advisory Committee notes that, for the reason stated in paragraphs 16 and 17 of the statement of the Secretary-General, it is proposed that the secretariat be established in two stages. In the first stage, three posts (one D-1, one P-4 and one General Service) would be established as at 1 January 2003, and in a second stage the remaining three posts (one P-3, one P-2 and

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one General Service) would be established in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

4. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 10, 12 and 17 (b) of the statement that with the establishment of the Forum, the scope and nature of the activities related to indigenous issues to be carried out by the United Nations and the organizations of the United Nations system would expand beyond the human rights area. Up to the present, within the United Nations Secretariat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has carried out activities related to indigenous people, including coordination. That Office has been designated as the lead agency for the preparation of the Forum and will utilize its substantive expertise on indigenous issues and its experience in servicing the first session of the Forum. The Committee notes, however, that in paragraph 4 (a) of the statement, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to appoint a secretariat unit within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to assist the Forum in carrying out its mandate. **The Committee recommends that the role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and that of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the furtherance of objectives, activities and programmes of the United Nations on indigenous matters be clarified, with a view to establishing a clear delineation of responsibilities, avoiding duplication of efforts and optimizing the use of resources.**

5. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the three posts requested for the secretariat of the Forum for the biennium 2002-2003 in the first stage (one D-1, one P-4 and one General Service); however, with regard to the posts proposed for the second stage (one P-3, one P-2 and one General Service), the Committee recommends that the General Assembly consider such proposals as the Secretary-General may submit in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005, taking into account the need to clarify the role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and that of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to indigenous issues, as indicated above.**

6. **In the light of the recommendation in paragraph 5 above, the Fifth Committee may wish to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.7, there would be financial implications arising of up to $412,800 for the regular budget in the biennium 2002-2003. The provision, representing a potential charge against the contingency fund, would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement to be presented to the Fifth Committee at the end of the current session.**